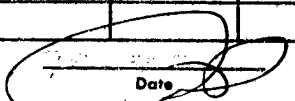


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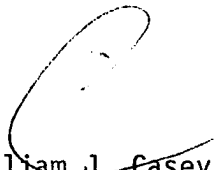
Executive Registry
83-1104

28 February 1983

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Operations
FROM: Director of Central Intelligence
SUBJECT: Article by Michael Ledeen

Here's that piece that Michael Ledeen did on the attempted assassination of the Pope. Of particular interest is the significance of the quote from the 12/11/82 issue of Il Giornale Nuovo of Milan.

Do we have an updated study of the Bulgarian Intelligence Service and its ties to the KGB?


William J. Casey



25X1

THE BULGARIAN CONNECTION BY MICHAEL LEDEEN

The story coming out of Rome actually has four separate dimensions. The first regards the plot to kill the Pope, in which it now appears certain that the Bulgarian intelligence service—and thus the KGB—was intimately involved. The second concerns the penetration of the Italian socialist trade union movement (and particularly its international division) by Bulgarian agents. This directly concerns Poland, since two of the alleged Bulgarian agents were intermediaries between the Italian trade unions and the Polish union, Solidarity. The third concerns Bulgarian involvement in drug and arms trafficking in northern Italy, particularly in and around Trieste. The fourth regards Bulgarian efforts to get involved in the kidnapping and interrogation of General James Dozier.

Each of the first two stories rests essentially upon the confessions of Bulgarian agents: Ahmet Ali Agca, and Luigi Scricciolo. The first is the man who shot the Pope, the second a former high-ranking trade union official. Agca's testimony is said to be highly detailed and convincing; apparently he led investigators through the streets of Rome to a series of apartments, each rented by Bulgarian officials. Before entering each apartment, Agca described the layout and contents, down to details about art work on the walls, color of carpets, and so forth. In addition, he identified three Bulgarians—Antonov, and the two "diplomats" who raced out of Italy once Agca began to talk—from a set of photographs.

There is some confusion about the arrested Bulgarian airline employee's role; some papers claim that Antonov smuggled the gun into Italy, while others suggest that he ~~passed~~²⁶⁵ Agca into Rome without ever passing through immigration and customs. But there seems to be little doubt about Antonov's ~~role~~^{INVOLVEMENT}, and this is supported by the personality of the investigating magistrate (Judge Martella is exceedingly prudent, and is not the sort of person who would take a huge political risk without convincing evidence) and by the decision of an appeals court in Rome to keep Antonov in prison without bail. Finally, there is the remarkable behavior of the Bulgarian Government.

Last September, when two Italians were arrested in Bulgaria on obviously trumped-up espionage charges, the official Bulgarian press agency issued a statement which said in so many words, "it would not surprise us if the crazy Italians retaliated by accusing us of being involved in the attempt to kill the Pope."

The Scricciolo case adds an additional dimension to the "Bulgarian connection". Luigi Scricciolo and his wife were high-ranking officials of the UIL, the Socialist Party's trade union movement. Both maintained high-level contacts with foreign labor movements, ranging from the AFL-CIO to Solidarnosc. One or the other invariably accompanied union leaders on foreign trips, and they specialized in Polish questions. Scricciolo had access to all of the union's correspondence, including the contacts with the underground

leadership of Solidarnosc after the proclamation of military rule a year ago. He has confessed to passing information about Poland to the Bulgarians, including the names of the clandestine Solidarnosc leadership. This was undoubtedly very helpful to the KGB in rounding up the Polish trade union leaders following the establishment of martial law.

Luigi Scricciolo was recruited by the Bulgarians in the late sixties, when he accepted money from them on behalf of an extremist left-wing organization. Last year, he reportedly communicated with the Red Brigades during the kidnaping of General James Dozier, offering Bulgarian assistance. It is not known whether there were other contacts between the Bulgarians and Italian terrorists, although at least one former Red Brigadier has recently "remembered" that one of the organization's most important leaders—Mario Moretti, now in jail, accused of the murder of Aldo Moro—travelled frequently to Bulgaria. Other terrorists have vociferously denied such a connection. Still, there may be other connections; Scricciolo reportedly told an Italian judge that the Bulgarians planned to use Agca to kill Lech Walesa in Rome a few months before the attempt against the Pope, and Italian journalists have confirmed that Agca entered the country and stayed in the same hotels and pensioni, using the same alias, as when he shot the Pope.

Finally, there is the discovery of a massive arms and drug smuggling operation, in which the Bulgarians (along with Syrians, Palestinians and other opportunists of various description) were deeply involved. This matches a pattern already uncovered by Turkish investigators, and described by Claire Sterling in *READER'S DIGEST* and Marving Kalb on NBC.

Given all of this, one marvels at so much public scepticism by the likes of the New York Times, especially since Italian President Pertini, former Prime Minister Spadolini, a former German Interior Minister and a former Spanish Prime Minister have all publicly stated their conviction that there is a Soviet bloc impetus behind much of West European terrorism.

THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION

Many Americans have been impressed by the courage of the Italian Government in this matter, but if they remembered the Dozier case, they should not have been surprised. After all, during the Dozier matter they saw for the first time in years that the Government of the United States was prepared to back them fully. Ambassador Rabb impressed upon Italian leaders that in a matter of such seriousness, their traditional reluctance to throw caution to the winds had to be abandoned, and they had to act. They undoubtedly expect similar support in this case, and if they do not get it, they are capable of remarkable about-faces. The following should be kept in mind:

1. Many Christian Democrats, including the current Secretary of

Christian Democratic Party (Ciriaco De Mita), wish to keep open the option of more active collaboration with the Communist Party. The more vigorous the position of the Christian Democrats on this matter, the more difficult it will be to cut deals with the Communists. Indeed, I'm morally certain that Fanfani is trying to damp down the rhetoric on this case, because he desperately needs Communist votes to become President of the Republic after Pertini's term is over. Thus, if left to their own devices, the Christian Democrats are NOT going to push this as hard as we might wish;

2. The intelligence services are greatly embarrassed by this story, since it was developed independently of their efforts. The case was built by the investigating judge, with assistance from police and carabinieri. Thus, at the beginning, the services poo-pooed the case, because if it proves to be true, they will have to answer all kinds of embarrassing questions, above all about their failure to gather such information in the past.

3. There are potentially damaging economic fallouts from this case.

Italy does a vast volume of foreign trade with the Soviet bloc, and if they push too hard on the Pope affair (formal rupture of diplomatic relations, for example, as the Socialists are demanding), there may be economic reprisals from the Soviets.

4. Diplomatically, the instinct of the Foreign Ministry will be to try to make the best of a bad situation. Thus, they will try to keep everything calm, permit the case against Antonov to be developed, and then proceed apace. They (not to mention the Government) cannot relish a major tiff with the Soviet Union.

5. Finally, we can be sure that the Communist Party (both the official one and the clandestine one, with its agents in all other parties) is doing everything in its power to try to make this major embarrassment go away. It has driven the peace movement off the front pages, it has focussed attention in Italy (and in much of Europe) on the evils of the KGB and on Soviet connections to international terrorism, and it inevitably weakens the Communists within Italy as well.

OUR ROLE

In his courageous speech before Parliament, Defense Minister Lagorio said that the Agca operation was an act of war in a time of peace, and was part of the great clandestine East-West struggle that takes place on Italian soil. In saying this, Lagorio was asking US to assume our proper responsibilities in this matter. Every serious Italian knows that we have a great stake in this story. Every serious Italian watched in wonder as KGB disinformation swept over the country at the time of the neutron bomb affair, and again at the time of the

anti-INF peace offensive. We were told at the highest level that this campaign was the greatest that had been seen in Italy since 1948. Now it is our turn to wage ideological battle against the Russians. If we fail now, the costs will be enormous, for those brave Italians who are fighting, are fighting for us, and, they hope, along with us.

Therefore, we must be involved along with them. I have no idea what the Prime Minister, the President and the Pope told the Secretary of State in Rome, but we do not need them to define our interests for us. We must start telling what we know about this story, and we must call the attention of our own public to the very convincing evidence that has been brought forward in the Italian press, and by such American reporters as Claire Sterling and Marvin Kalb.

To say "no comment" is to abdicate our responsibilities, to leave these courageous Italians without the kind of support they deserve, and to give the Russians a chance to try to recover. We should drive home the lessons of the Agca story: if they don't like political developments, they kill their political opponents; if they don't like free trade unions, they try to destroy them; if they fear the development of free societies, they try to subvert them through arms, drugs and terrorism.

Our history in Italy is simple: we failed them at the time of the Moro case, we failed to provide them with evidence they (wrongly) believed we had about international terrorism, we were good at the time of Dozier, and now that they are face-to-face with the KGB, we must support them.

Here is the sort of thing that should be used:

From "Liberation" (Paris), as quoted in il Giornale nuovo (Milan) 12/11/82. In a long interview, Colonel Stefan Svredlev, former head of the Bulgarian Secret Services, who defected three years ago and now lives in Germany, said "I don't doubt the participation of the Bulgarian secret services in the attempt against the Pope, but under instructions of the KGB, whose leader at the time, Yuri Andropov, could only have approved the operation at the command of Brezhnev." Svredlev said that the Bulgarians were always favored by the Russians for this sort of operation, because the Bulgarians are the most "secure and the most servile."

Svredlev said³ that the Bulgarians operate independently "only on their own territory, and in the Balkans, while in truly international operations they follow the instructions of the KGB, which has its own officers in every sector of Bulgarian espionage, and also Bulgarian agents who clandestinely report to the KGB." Thus, according to Svredlev, it is quite possible that the operation took place without the knowledge of the chief of the services, or even Zhivkov himself.

"During my years in the services a group of KGB agents was in every department of ours. They were called 'advisers' but they were true chiefs.

These so-called advisers reported to a higher officer, who was in direct contact with the Kremlin. Their major concern was the department of the Bulgarian secret services charged with destroying 'internal and external enemies,' but which became a true terrorist group."